

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 PC-01 IO-13 DHA-02 /096 W

-----011700Z 008428 /43

R 011241Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 944

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 1521

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJECT: JANATA PARTY ORGANIZES FOR THE ELECTIONS

REF: NEW DELHI 1416

1. LEADERS OF THE FOUR MAIN NON-COMMUNIST OPPOSITION PARTIES (CONGRESS (O), JAN SANGH,BLD, AND SOCIALIST PARTY) ORGANIZED TO FORM A SINGLE JANATA PARTY ON JAN. 20. IN THE FOLLOWING WEEK, LEADERS OF THE NEW PARTY WERE ANNOUNCED. CONGRESS (O) LEADER MORARJI DESAI IS CHAIRMAN? BLD PRESIDENT CHARAN SINGH IS DEPUTY  
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CHAIRMAN. FOUR GENERAL SECRETARIES WERE ALSO SELECTED: L.K. ADVANI (JAN SANGH), SURENDRA MOHAN (SOCIALIST PARTY), SIKANDAR BAKHT (CONGRESS (O)), AND RAM DHAN (REBEL CONGRESSMAN). THESE SIX OFFICIALS ARE MEMBERS OF THE PARTY'S NATIONAL COMMITTEE. THE OTHER MEMBERS ARE:  
CONGRESS (O): ASOKA MEHTA, C.B. GUPTA, N. SANJIVA REDDY,  
P. RAMACHANDRAN, SHYAMNANDAN MISHRA, P.C. SEN. SHANTI BHUSHAN.

SOCIALISTS: MRS. MRINAL GORAY, N.G. GORAY, SMAR GUHA, KARPURI THAKUR, A. SREEDHARAN, ARIF BEG.  
JANA SANGH: ATAL BEHARI VAJPAYEE, BHARON SINGH SHEKHAWAT, K.S. THAKRE, NANAJI DESHMUKH.  
BLD: BHANU PRATAP SINGH, BIJU PATNAIK, CHAND RAM, H.M. PATEL.

DEFECTED CONGRESSMEN: CHANDRA SHEKHAR.  
IN ADDITION, SHANTIBHUSHAN, A LEADER OF THE CONGRESS (O) AND THE LAWYER WHO ARGUED AGAINST MRS. GANDHI IN THE ALLAHABAD COURT CASE, WAS APPOINTED TREASURER OF THE PARTY, AND RAJENDRA PURI, A WRITER AND CARTOONIST, AS DIRECTOR OF CAMPAIGN PUBLICITY. INEVITABLY THERE HAVE BEEN BITTER COMPLAINTS FROM SOME OPPOSITION FIGURES LEFT OUT OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE (E.G; BLD LEADER PILOOMODY).

2. AS OPPOSED TO THE PROCEDURE FOLLOWED BY THE CONGRESS PARTY IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF TICKETS (REFTEL), THE JANATA PARTY APPARENTLY IS LEAVING MOST OF THE JOB OF SELECTING CANDIDATES TO THE STATE UNITS OF THE PARTY. A "CONVENOR" HAS BEEN APPOINTED FOR MOST STATES. EACH IS TO SET UP A SELECTION COMMITTEE WHICH WILL NARROW DOWN THE LIST OF SUITABLE CANDIDATES AND FORWARD THE FINAL LIST TO THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR ITS APPROVAL. ONLY IN CASES WHERE THE STATE COMMITTEES ENCOUNTERED PROBLEMS WOULD THE SELECTION PROCESS BE REFERRED TO THE CENTRAL LEADERSHIP FOR ITS DECISION.

3. THE JANATA LEADERSHIP NOW APPEARS TO HAVE RULED OUT, AT LEAST FOR THE PRESENT, THE POSSIBILITY OF BOYCOTTING THE ELECTION. ON JAN 31, THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE MET IN DELHI AND RESOLVED TO "ACCEPT THE ELECTORAL CHALLENGE THROWN DOWN BY THE RULING PARTY". THE RESOLUTION NOTED THAT THE PARTY FACED MANY OBSTACLES IN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CAMPAIGN AND REITERATED THE DEMAND THAT ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS BE RELEASED AND THAT ALL RESTRICTIONS ON THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ACTIVITY BE REMOVED. DESPITE THESE DIFFICULTIES, THE JANATA LEADERSHIP NOTED THAT THE PAST WEEK HAD BEEN MARKED BY A "TREMENDOUS UPSURGE OF MASS ENTHUSIASM FOR THE PARTY" (SEE NEW DELHI 1400 REPORTING ON THE JAN 30 RALLY IN DELHI). IN LIGHT OF THIS, THE COMMITTEE RESOLVED TO MOBILIZE THIS GROUND SWELL OF SUPPORT TO ENABLE THE PARTY TO "OVERCOME THE MACHINATIONS OF THE RULING PARTY". DEPUTY CHAIRMAN CHARAN SINGH HAD ALSO FALLEN INTO LINE AND BACK-PEDALED FROM HIS JAN. 28 STATEMENT IN LUCKNOW THAT THE JANATA PARTY MIGHT "RECONSIDER" ITS DECISION TO PARTICIPATE IF ALL PRISONERS WERE NOT RELEASED: ADDRESSING A PUBLIC RALLY IN KANPUR ON JAN. 30, HE SAID THAT THE JANATA PARTY HAD DECIDED "MOST RELUCTANTLY" TO CONTEST THE ELECTIONS DESPITE THE HANDICAPS POSED BY THE RULING PARTY. (CONTINUED...)

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AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 NEW DELHI 1521

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4. NEWSPAPERS ARE BUZZING WITH RUMORS ABOUT POSSIBLE ELECTORAL ALLIANCES, UNDERSTANDINGS AND ADJUSTMENTS AMONG THE CONTENDING PARTIES. AT THIS POINT, IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO PREDICT THE FINAL ALIGNMENT OF PARTIES IN THE VARIOUS STATES, SINCE NEGOTIATIONS ARE STILL GOING ON. JANATA GENERAL SECRETARY L.K. ADVANI TOLD REPORTERS YESTERDAY, HOWEVER, THAT THE PARTY ITENDED TO HAVE AS MANY ADJUSTMENTS AND UNDERSTANDINGS WITH OTHER PARTIES AS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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POSSIBLE IN ORDER THAT THERE WAS JUST ONE OPPOSITION CANDIDATE TO OPPOSE THE CONGRESS CANDIDATE IN EACH CONSTITUENCY. (IN THE PAST THE PAST THE MULTIPLICITY OF OPPOSITION PARTIES, EACH

FIELDING ITS OWN CANDIDATE, HAD DIVIDED THE ANTI-CONGRESS VOTE.) AT HIS PRESS CONFERENCE ADVANI STATED THAT THE JANATA PARTY STATE COMMITTEES HAD BEEN ASKED TO FORGE ELECTORAL ADJUSTMENTS WITH THE CPM. HE SAID THAT THE TWO PARTIES HAD SEVERAL THINGS IN COMMON: OPPOSITION TO THE EMERGENCY, TO THE 42ND CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT BILL, AND TO OTHER GOI RESTRICTIONS ON THE FREEDOM OF THE PEOPLE AND THE PRESS. IN ADDITION, ADVANI ANNOUNCED THAT THE AKALI DAL (A SIKH PARTY) WOULD BE ALLIED WITH THE JANATA PARTY IN THE PUNJAB. THE QUESTION OF AN ELECTORAL UNDERSTANDING OR ALLIANCE WITH THE DMK IN TAMIL NADU HAD BEEN LEFT TO THE JANATA PARTY'S CONVENOR IN THAT STATE.

5. FOR ITS PART, THE CPM APPEARS TO HAVE DECIDED TO CONTEST THE ELECTIONS. FOLLOWING A THREE-DAY MEETING OF THE PARTY'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE IN NEW DELHI, THE PARTY ANNOUNCED JAN. 30 THAT DESPITE ALL THE HANDICAPS PRESENTED BY THE SNAP ELECTION, IT WOULD ENTER THE CONTEST TO MUSTER THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF VOTES TO PROTEST THE EMERGENCY AND AUTHORITARIAN RULE AND TO DEFEAT THE CONGRESS. WHILE IT CANNOT CONSIDER A UNITED FRONT WITH THE JANATA PARTY WHICH REPRESENTS RIGHTIST AND VESTED INTERESTS, THE CPM SAID IT WANTED TO AVOID ELECTORAL CONTESTS WITH THE JANATA IN ORDER NOT TO DIVIDE THE OPPOSITION FORCES. IT WOULD BE SEEKING SEAT ADJUSTMENTS WITH THE NON-COMMUNIST OPPOSITION. BUT IT CAUTIONED STATE PARTY UNITS TO AVOID SUPPORTING OPPOSITION CANDIDATES WHO HAD "LOST CREDIBILITY AMONG THE PEOPLE", A FORMULATION WHICH ALLOWS THE CPM TO PICK AND CHOOSE AMONG THOSE WITH WHOM IT WILL COOPERATE. THE PARTY ADDED THAT THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF COOPERATION WITH THE CPI AS LONG AS IT CONTINUES ITS ALLIANCE WITH CONGRESS AND CHARGED THAT THE CPI WAS GANGING UP WITH CONGRESS TO FIGHT THE CPM AND OTHER "LEFT AND DEMOCRATIC FORCES" IN KERALA, WEST BENGAL AND TAMIL NADU. THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE'S ANNOUNCEMENT NOTWITHSTANDING, IT IS STILL PROBLEMATIC THAT THE CPM WILL RUN IN WEST BENGAL WHERE THE PROSPECTS OF RETAINING MANY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF ITS 20 SEATS ARE DIM.

6. IN A MOVE WHICH MAY BE INTENDED TO TRY TO FORCE THE GOVT'S HAND ON RELEASING REMAINING POLITICAL DETAINEES, JANATA GENERAL SECRETARY SURENDRA MOHAN TOLA A PRESS CONFERENCE ON JAN. 31 THAT ALL PROMINENT LEADERS OF THE NEW PARTY, INCLUDING THOSE WHO WERE STILL IN PRISON, WOULD CONTEST THE ELECTIONS. AMONG THOSE STILL UNDER DETENTION ARE MADHU LIMAYE, SHARAD YADAV AND RAJ NARAIN. MOHAN ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT SOCIALIST LEADER GEORGE FERNANDES (CURRENTLY STANDING TRIAL IN DELHI FOR HIS ROLE IN THE BARODA DYNAMITE CONSPIRACY) HAD EXPRESSED HIS WILLINGNESS TO CONTEST THE ELECTIONS AS A JANATA PARTY CANDIDATE. IN ANNOUNCING THE PARTY'S INTENTION TO NOMINATE DETAINEES AS CANDIDATES FOR LOK SABHA SEATS, MOHAN SAID THAT THE GOVT WAS AWARE THAT SOME OF THE CONTESTANTS WERE STILL IN JAIL, THUS GIVING THE IMPRESSION THAT

THE OPPOSITION WANTED T EMBARASS THE GI INTO RELEASING THEM SINCE,  
AS MOHAN NOTED, THEIR CONTINUED DETENTION WOULD PREVENT THEM FROM  
CONVASSING IN THEIR CONSTITUENCIES. INDEED, CONGRESS M TOLD  
AN EMBOFF TODAY THAT CHANCES ARE GOOD THAT THE REMAINING POLITICAL  
LEADERS (INCLUDING RAJ NARAIN, WHO HAD BROUGHT THE ALLAHABAD COURT  
CASE AGAINST MRS. GANDHI) WILL BE RELEASED IN THE NEAR FUTURE.  
HOWEVER, THOSE CHRGED WITH COMMITTING VIOLENT CRIMES OR ENTERING  
INTO A CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE STATE (SUCH AS FERNANDES) WILL NOT  
BE RELEASED.  
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## Message Attributes

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**To:** STATE  
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